REMARKS

In the December 14, 2005 Office Action, the specification was objected to and claims 1-12, 15-32, and 35-37 stand rejected in view of prior art, while claims 13 and 14 were allowed, and 33, 34, and 38 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the December 14, 2005 Office Action, Applicant has amended the title, amended claim 10, respectfully traverses the prior art rejections of claims 1-9, 11, 12, 15-32, and 35-37, and has included comments to support the traversals. Applicant has also amended claim 35 to correct a typographical error discovered upon review. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. Thus, claims 1-38 are pending, with claims 1, 10, 11, 13, 23, 30, and 31 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

Specification

On page 2 of the Office Action, the specification was objected to for a non-descriptive title. In response, Applicant has amended the title.

Specifically, the title of the invention has been amended to read FLYWHEEL ASSEMBLY HAVING A DETACHABLE SUPPORT MEMBER FOR A DAMPER MECHANISM THEREOF. Applicant believes that this title is more descriptive.

Applicant believes that the specification is now correct. Withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

On pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-12, 15, and 18-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication

2001-140928 (Fukushima). In response, Applicant has amended independent claim 10 to define clearly the present invention over the prior art of record. Applicant respectfully traverses the prior art rejections to claims 1-9, 11, 12, and 18-28, and has included comments to support the traversals.

Claim 10

Applicant has amended claim 10 to recite that the axially extending portions, which are attached to the crankshaft, support the damper mechanism in a radial direction. As seen in the Figures of Fukushima, the axially extending portion 46 does not support the damper mechanism in a radial direction. Applicant respectfully asserts that the extending portion 46 of Fukushima is clearly designed to rotate relative to the damper mechanism to compress the springs 30 thereof. Further, Applicant respectfully asserts that the damper mechanism of Fukushima is supported by a bearing 39 in the radial direction. Moreover, if the extending portion 46 of Fukushima were to support the damper mechanism in the radial direction, relative rotation would be hampered.

Claims 1-9 and 18-28

Independent claims 1 and 23 recite a support member that supports the flywheel on the crankshaft. As seen in the Figures of Fukushima, the axially extending portion 46 does not support the flywheels on the crankshaft. Applicant respectfully asserts that the extending portion 46 of Fukushima is clearly designed to rotate relative to the flywheels to compress the springs 30 thereof. Further, Applicant respectfully asserts that the flywheel of Fukushima is supported by a bearing 39 which is not connected to the crankshaft 2, but to a transmission shaft 3. Moreover, if the extending portion 46 of Fukushima were to support the damper mechanism in the radial direction, relative rotation would be hampered.

Claim 11

Claim 11 recites a damper mechanism with a first damper having a first spring, and a second damper having a second spring with a rigidity greater than that of the first spring. Applicant respectfully asserts that Fukushima does not disclose a damper mechanism with first and second dampers having spring with different rigidities. In fact, on page 3 of the Office Action, it is clearly stated that Fukushima does not disclose a damper with plural damping stages.

Clearly, the structures of aforementioned claims are ***not*** disclosed or suggested by Fukushima or any other prior art of record. It is well settled under U.S. patent law that for a reference to anticipate a claim, the reference must disclose each element of the claim within the reference. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 10 as now amended and claims 1, 11, and 23 are not anticipated by the prior art of record. Withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Moreover, Applicant believes that dependent claims 2-9, 12, 15, 18-22, and 24-28 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 1, 10, 11, and 23, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claims are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicant believes that since the prior art of record does not anticipate the independent claim 1, 10, 11, and 23 neither does the prior art anticipate the dependent claims.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

On pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action, claims 16, 17, 29-32, and 35-37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication 2001-140928 (Fukushima) in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,244,134 (Thelander). In response,

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections of claims 16, 17, 29-32, and 35-37, and has included comments to support the traversals.

Claims 11 and 31

As mentioned, claim 11 recites a damper mechanism with a first damper having a first spring, and a second damper having a second spring with a rigidity greater than that of the first spring. Claim 11 also recites that the first damper has first and second members each of which supports the rotation direction ends of the first spring. Claim 31 recites similar language. On page 3 of the Office Action, it is stated that Fukushima does not disclose a damper with plural damping stages, but that Thelander does. As seen in Figures 1 and 5 of Thelander, Applicant respectfully asserts that no one member supports both directional ends of the first spring 23 as recited in claims 11 and 31 of the present application. In other words, Thelander discloses members that disclose only ***one*** end of the first spring 23 and not ***both*** ends as recited in claims 11 and 31 of the present application. Thus, Applicant respectfully asserts that if the damper of Thelander were combined with the damper mechanism of Fukushima, it would still fail to disclose or suggest the flywheel assembly of claims 11 and 31 of the present invention.

Claim 23 and 30

As stated, independent claims 23 and 30 respectively recite a support member and a flexible member that support the flywheel on the crankshaft. As seen in the Figures of Fukushima, the axially extending portion 46 does not support the flywheels on the crankshaft. Applicant respectfully asserts that the extending portion 46 of Fukushima is clearly designed to rotate relative to the flywheels to compress the springs 30 thereof. Further, Applicant respectfully asserts that the flywheel of Fukushima is supported by a bearing 39 which is not connected to the crankshaft 2, but to a transmission shaft 3. Moreover, Applicant respectfully

asserts that Thelander, which was cited as an example of damper with plural damping stages, fails to disclose a flexible member that supports a flywheel on a crankshaft. Since neither reference discloses or suggests this feature, Applicant respectfully asserts that the combination also fails to disclose or to suggest this feature.

Clearly the aforementioned arrangements are ***not*** disclosed or suggested by the Fukushima reference, the Thelander patent, or any other prior art of record. It is well settled in U.S. patent law that the mere fact that the prior art can be modified does ***not*** make the modification obvious, unless the prior art ***suggests*** the desirability of the modification. Accordingly, the prior art of record lacks any suggestion or expectation of success for combining the patents to create the Applicant's unique arrangement of a flywheel assembly.

Moreover, Applicant believes that dependent claims 16, 17, 29-32, and 35-37 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 11, 23, and 31, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claims are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicant believes that since the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the invention as set forth in independent claims 11 and 31, the prior art of record also fails to disclose or suggest the inventions as set forth in the dependent claims.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that these rejections be withdrawn in view of the above comments and amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

On page 4 of the Office Action, claims 13 and 14 were allowed, and claims 33, 34, and 38 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-38 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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